

PEOPLE PLANES PLACES

Edited by MC1 Johnie Hickmon

Awards

In January *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) received the **Fleet Forces Command Retention Excellence Award** for FY07.

On 7 January *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) earned the 2007 **Flagship Project Good Neighbor Award** for the crew's volunteer efforts in Hampton Roads, Va.

On 14 January *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) earned the **Personal Excellence Navywide Flagship Award** under the Personal Excellence Partnership category for her crew's community relations projects.



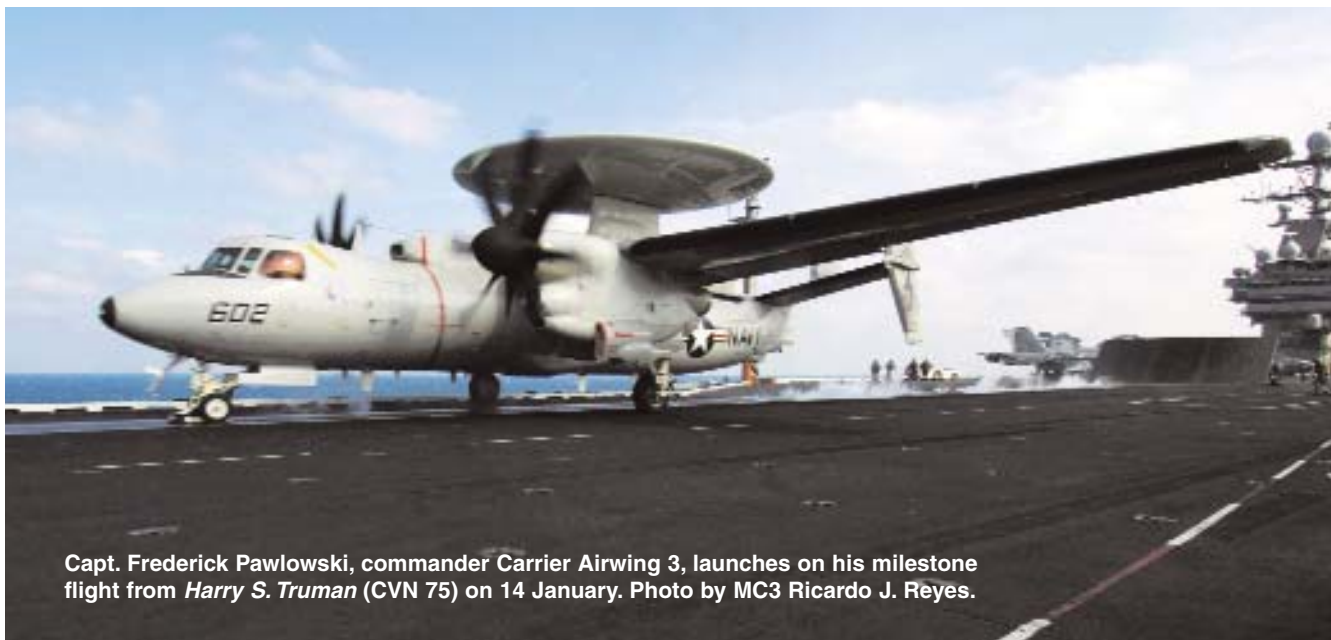
Above, safety department members aboard *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) display their Voluntary Protection Program Excellence in Safety award on 30 January. Photo by MCSN Jacques Renard. Right, a KC-130F and a KC-130J of VMGR-152 fly in formation over Okinawa, Japan, on 13 February. Photo by LCpl. Kristofer Atkinson.

On 25 January *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74) received the **Voluntary Protection Program 4th Quarter Excellence in Safety Award** for her safety record during the ship's dock planned incremental availability at Puget Sound Shipyard, Wash.

Commander, Naval Surface Forces awarded *Essex* (LHD 2), *Tarawa* (LHA 1), *Boxer* (LHD 4), *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6), *Bataan* (LHD 5), *Wasp* (LHD 1), *Nassau* (LHA 4), and *Enterprise* (CVN 65) the **2007 Battle E**.







Capt. Frederick Pawlowski, commander Carrier Airwing 3, launches on his milestone flight from *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) on 14 January. Photo by MC3 Ricardo J. Reyes.

Milestones

In June 2007 **HSC-28** achieved 50,000 mishap free flight hours.

On 8 October 2007 **VFA-136** surpassed 60,000 mishap free flight hours.

On 14 January CVW-3 CO **Capt. Frederick Pawlowski** recorded his 6,000th flight hour, trapping on board *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) in a E-2C Hawkeye assigned to VAW-126.

On 14 January *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) recovered her 75,000th aircraft without any mishaps.

On 16 January **Cdr. Jay Vannice** of VAW-77 surpassed 4,000 flight hours in the E-2C Hawkeye.

On 29 January **HMM-161** achieved 60,000 mishap free flight hours.

On 16 March **Capt. Michael Manazir**, CO of *Nimitz* (CVN 68), recorded his 1,000th trap flying an F/A-18F Super Hornet from VFA-41 during operations in the East China Sea.

Scan Pattern

Between 23 January and 1 February the **Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group**—*Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) with embarked CVW-2 and DESRON-

9, *Mobile Bay* (CG 53), *Curtis* (FFG 38), *Momsen* (DDG 92), *Russell* (DDG 59), *Shoup* (DDG 86), and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 11—participated in a Joint Task Force Exercise off Southern California.

On 24 January the ***Kearsarge* Expeditionary Strike Group**—*Kearsarge* (LHD 3), *Ponce* (LPD 15), *Gunston Hall* (LSD 44), *Vicksburg* (CG 69), *Porter* (DDG 78), *Carr* (FFG 52), and *Miami* (SSN 755)—completed ULTRA-S, a comprehensive evaluation of each ship's training procedures.

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An MH-60R with HSM-71 Det 1 refuels above the flight deck of *Preble* (DDG 88) underway in the Pacific Ocean during the new helicopter's first at-sea exercises in January.

ASTRONAUT'S ASHES COMMITTED TO THE SEA

By MCSN Torrey W. Lee, *Ronald Reagan* Public Affairs

The ashes of pioneering astronaut and retired Navy Capt. Walter M. "Wally" Schirra were committed to the sea during a ceremony on board *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), while steaming in the Pacific Ocean on 11 February. Schirra, a former Navy test pilot and one of the original seven Mercury astronauts, died on 3 May 2007 at the age of 84.

On 3 October 1962 Schirra became the fifth American in space and the third American to orbit the Earth, circling the globe six times in a flight that lasted more than nine hours. "We shared a common dream to test the limits of man's imagination and daring," Schirra once wrote. "Those early pioneering flights of Mercury, the performances of Gemini, and the trips to the moon established us once and for all as what I like to call a spacefaring nation. Like England, Spain, and Portugal crossing the seas in search of their nations' greatness, so we reached for the skies and ennobled our nation."



Schirra was born on 12 March 1923 in Hackensack, N.J., and graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1945. He served aboard *Alaska* (CB 1) during the final months of World War II and later attended pilot training at NAS Pensacola, Fla. He earned designation as Naval Aviator in 1948 and joined Fighter Squadron 71. Schirra flew F-84E Thunderjet low-level bombers for the Army as an exchange officer during the Korean War and was credited with shooting down at least one MiG fighter.

As a test pilot from 1952 to 1956, Schirra helped the Navy develop the Sidewinder air-to-air missile and the F7U-3 Cutlass fighter. He also served as an instructor pilot in the Cutlass and the FJ-3 Fury. Schirra flew F3H-2N Demons as Operations Officer for VF-124 aboard



Capt. Walter M. "Wally" Schirra, pictured above in 1962, was eulogized by fellow Mercury astronaut Gene Cernan, left, during a memorial service at Fort Rosecrans, Calif., on 21 May 2007. Photo by MCSN Chelsea Kennedy. Below, Schirra's ashes were committed to the sea during a ceremony aboard *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) on 11 February. Photo by MC3 Kathleen Gorby.

Lexington (CVA 16) from 1956 to 1957. After test pilot training at Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Md., Schirra began development work on the F-4H fighter jet—the forerunner to the Phantom.

Schirra first heard about Project Mercury while serving at Patuxent River. He joined the original seven Mercury astronauts on 9 April 1959. In addition to his Mercury flight, Schirra was command pilot on Gemini 6 which became the first manned spacecraft to rendezvous with another spacecraft (Gemini 7) on 15 December 1965. He also served as command pilot of Apollo VII on 11 October 1968, conducting crucial maneuverability tests in preparation for the subsequent Apollo moon landings.

Schirra retired from NASA and the Navy as a captain on 1 July 1969, having been the only astronaut to fly in the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo programs. The Navy announced on 4 March 2008 that the eighth of its *Lewis* and *Clark*-class dry cargo/ammunition ships (T-AKE) would bear Schirra's name.



Capt. Michael Manazir, CO of *Nimitz* (CVN 68), celebrates his 1,000th trap on 16 March. Photo by MCSN John Wagner.



An MH-53E Sea Dragon from HM-15 performs mine countermeasures training using a MK-105 sled in the Arabian Gulf on 12 November 2007. HM-15, *Wasp* (LHD 1), and *Gladiator* (MCM 11) conducted mine countermeasures exercises between 12–15 November 2007. Photo by LCdr. John L. Kline.

On 25 January **HSM-71 Det 1** completed its first underway period with an MH-60R Seahawk while embarked on board *Preble* (DDG 88). The det accrued 23 flight hours, made 80 small deck landings, and conducted 20 vertical replenishment evaluations with the new Seahawk while *Preble* was underway off the West Coast. HSM-71 is the first operational MH-60R squadron.

On 12 February ***Boxer* (LHD 4)** began unit level training assessment certification off the coast of southern California. The assessment tests the abilities of different shipboard teams responding to emergency situations.

On 28 February **Commander, Task Force 67**, *PATRON* Sigonella, Sicily, and Fleet Maritime Patrol Mobile Operations Command Center Mediterranean completed Exercise Maritime Safari 2008 during a deployment to Ikeja Air Force Base, Nigeria.

On the Move

On 18 January ***Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6)** returned to San Diego, Calif., after conducting a postdeployment ammunition offload.

On 21 January **VAQ-133** returned to NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., after a deployment to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

On 24 January ***Essex* (LHD 2)** departed Sasebo, Japan, and arrived in Okinawa, Japan, on 28 January to



A CVW-11 F/A-18 Hornet escorts a Russian Tu-95 Bear from the vicinity of *Nimitz* (CVN 68) in the western Pacific Ocean on 2 February.

HMH-462 GIVES SAILORS A LIFT

By LCpl. Melissa Tugwell, MCAS Miramar, Calif.

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 462 conducted special training with several Navy squadrons on 12 December 2007 at NAS Coronado, Calif., to broaden joint operations involving the CH-53E Super Stallion.

The exercise required the Super Stallion to take on a naval boat crew before lifting their special warfare rigid hull inflatable boat from its trailer and carrying it to a designated location on the water. As the small craft touched the water, the sailors rappelled down a rope and into the boat.

Throughout the exercise, the sailors had to battle the helicopter's rotor wash. The exercise was conducted twice with boat crews from Special Boat Team 20 and Naval Special Warfare Group 4 both from NAB Little Creek, Va., along with Special Boat Team 12 from NAB Coronado.

The Marines with HMH-462 successfully completed their mission of picking up and lowering the boat into the water while the sailors completed their mission of latching and unlatching the lines from the Super Stallion to the boat, safely climbing in the helicopter, and then fastroping back into the boat after it was placed into the water.



LCpl. Melissa Tugwell

embark the 31st MEU for a deployment throughout eastern and southeastern Asia.

On 24 January **VMGR-352**, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing departed March ARB, Calif., for Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

The **Kearsarge Expeditionary Strike Group**—*Kearsarge* (LHD 3) with embarked 22nd MEU, *Porter* (DDG 78), *Ponce* (LPD 15), *Gunston Hall* (LSD 44), *Carr* (FFG 52), *Vicksburg* (CG 69), and *Miami* (SSN 755)—completed a regularly scheduled deployment. *Vicksburg* returned to her homeport of NS Mayport, Fla., on 25 January. The other ships returned to their homeports of NS Norfolk, Va.—*Porter* and *Carr* on 25 January; *Ponce* and *Gunston Hall* on 27 January; *Miami* on 29 January; and *Kearsarge* on 1 February.

On 7 February ***Bataan* (LHD 5)** moved out of dry dock to her new berth at Norfolk Naval Shipyard as part of her depot planned maintenance availability.

On 8 February the ***Nimitz* Carrier Strike Group**—*Nimitz* (CVN 68), with embarked CVW-11 and DESRON-23, *Princeton* (CG 59), *John Paul Jones* (DDG 53), *Higgins* (DDG 76), *Chafee* (DDG 90), HSL-49, HSL-37, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 11—entered the 7th Fleet AOR.

On 9 February ***Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71)** returned to NS Norfolk, Va., after conducting carrier qualifications.

On 25 February elements of the ***Nassau* Expeditionary Strike Group**—*Nassau* (LHA 4), *Nashville* (LPD 13), *Ashland* (LSD 48), *Ross* (DDG 71), *Bulkeley* (DDG 84),

CHANGE OF COMMAND

CSG-3: RAdm. M. Stewart O'Bryan relieved RAdm. Kevin M. Quinn, 26 Sep 07.

CVW-1: Capt. James Paulsen relieved Capt. Mark E. Wralstad, 25 Jan.

Essex (LHD 2): Capt. Kerry B. Canady relieved Capt. Brian T. Donegan, 4 Feb.

HS-15: Cdr. Christopher C. Misner relieved Cdr. Todd J. Flannery, 28 Mar.

HSL-40: Capt. Glenn C. Doyle relieved Cdr. Douglas A. Malin, 11 Feb.

PATWING-10: Capt. Kenneth E. Seliga relieved Capt. David M. Taylor, 24 Jan.

Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71): Capt. Ladd Wheeler relieved Capt. John R. Haley, 11 Jan.

VAQ-129: Capt. Christopher Shay relieved Capt. Stephen McNerney, 8 Feb.

VAQ-141: Cdr. Michael D. McKenna relieved Cdr. Craig A. Clapperton, 11 Sep 07.

VAW-121: Cdr. Mark R. Stoops relieved Cdr. Steven J. Wieman, 31 Jan.

VAW-123: Cdr. Chris Sund relieved Cdr. Terry Morris, 21 Feb.

VFA-22: Cdr. Christopher W. Chope relieved Cdr. Randall D. Tashjian, 21 Feb.

VFA-25: Cdr. David J. Lobdell

relieved Cdr. Stephen M. Thompson, 16 Aug 07.

VFA-204: Cdr. Jeffrey A. Baumgarten relieved Cdr. Lowen B. Loftin, 17 Nov 07.

VR-62: Cdr. Shawn C. Casey relieved Cdr. Thomas C. O'Connell, 26 Jan.

VRC-40: Cdr. Matthew G. Westfall relieved Cdr. Mark F. Light, 24 Jan.

VS-32: Cdr. Douglas W. Carpenter relieved Cdr. Douglas H. Walker, 7 Mar.

VT-22: Cdr. Chris T. Kirby relieved Cdr. Bradley J. Kidwell, 22 Feb.

and *Philippine Sea* (CG 58)—arrived in the 6th Fleet AOR.

Rescues

On 7 January crew members from **HS-7**, embarked on *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75), rescued three aviators after an F/A-18E and F/A-18F from CVW-3 crashed during operations in the Arabian Gulf. Upon hearing a mayday call, the crew of Dusty 615 headed toward the downed aircraft approximately 25 nautical miles from the carrier. Dusty 614 and Dusty 617 were called to assist in the search. Dusty 615 located the two F/A-18F Super Hornet aircrewmembers and hoisted the pilot into their helo, while Dusty 614 arrived a few minutes later and hoisted the F/A-18E pilot from the water. Dusty 617 picked up the F/A-18F's WSO, who had been in the water for more than an hour.

On 15 January a SAR crew from **NAS Key West, Fla.**, recovered an Air Force pilot who ejected from his F-16C Fighting Falcon 55 miles west of Key West. After the base received a distress call, an SH-60F launched and located the downed pilot.

On 25 January sailors from **Essex (LHD 2)** and **HSC-25** rescued a merchant sailor suffering from stroke-like symptoms while in the Sea of Japan. After



An LSE from HS-7 stands by as pilots conduct preflight inspections aboard *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75). Facing page, Ltjg. Curtis Reiss, left, LCdr. Matthew Duffy, and Lt. Cheryl Zeiss from VAW-126 gather radar information from inside an E-2C Hawkeye over the Arabian Gulf on 5 March. Photo by MC3 Ricardo J. Reyes.

receiving a medical evacuation request from USNS *Loyal* (T-AGOS 22), *Essex* launched an MH-60S Seahawk carrying the ship's general medical officer and a hospital corpsman. Because *Loyal* was unable to provide a landing area for the helo, the medical officer was lowered to the ship's deck to evaluate the patient. After making a brief assessment, they lifted the patient back to the helo and took him to *Essex*. *Essex* steamed 100 miles to Sasebo, Japan, where they transferred the patient to a hospital.

Outreach

On 7 February sailors from **Carl Vinson** (CVN 70) cleaned the area outside Northern Grumman Shipyard, Newport News, Va., during a community relations project.

On 8 February sailors from **Wasp** (LHD 1) caulked windows and siding and painted during a community relations project with Habitat for Humanity in Mayport, Fla.

On 12 February sailors from **Nimitz** (CVN 68) and embarked **CVW-11** spent the day completing yard work and cleaning at The Sakura Institute for the Mentally Disabled and the Seiwa Catholic High School during a port visit to Sasebo, Japan.



FLIGHTBAG

Reunions

Ranger (CVA/CV 61), 13–17 August, Valley Forge, Pa. POC: George Meoli, 203-453-4279, gmeoli@erols.com.

VP-10, 14–16 August, NAS Brunswick, Me. POC: Doug O’Rielly, 972-247-6695, vp10_archives@juno.com

VFA-11, 15–17 August, Virginia Beach, Va., POC: Derek Corbett, derek.corbett@cvw3.navy.mil or www.VFA-11.navy.mil.

Boxer (CV/CVA/CVS 21, LPH/LHD 4), 20–23 August, Gaithersburg, Md. POC: Dick Yanko, 610-356-4871.

Salisbury Sound (AV 13), 17–21 September, Myrtle Beach, SC. POC: Marian L. Bruce, 505-293-3841, brubru@comcast.net.

VQ-1/2/5/6 (Including support groups), 18–21 September, Pensacola, Fla. POC: Allan Prevette, 805-482-1204, pierreputt@earthlink.net.

NAS/NOB Trinidad including VPB-208, VPMS-8, VP-48, VP-34, FASRON 105, and USMC Det., 25–28 September, Branson, Mo. POC: F. D. Barrett, 870-496-2285, barrett@ozarkisp.net.

PBY Catalina International Association, 1–5 October, Denver, Colo. POC: Don Mortimer, 631-298-2685, pbydon@optonline.net.

Intrepid (CV/CVA/CVS 11), several reunions are scheduled.

– Norfolk, Va., 17–21 September, POC: Tom Bryant, 864-998-4764, Intrepid_tom@meta-net.net.

– Coshocton, Ohio, 19–21 September, POC: Robert Hall, pintobob169@yahoo.com.

– Evansville, Ind., 9–12 October, POC: Chuck Coppess, 219-762-8714, w5147956@yahoo.com.

– San Diego, Calif., 15–20 October, POC: Wayne Erven, 925-462-6877, oldsalt2@comcast.net.